

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 199596

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SWEL, EAID, RO

SUBJECT: REPORT OF BUILDING REPAIR TEAM

1. REPORT OF AID BUILDING REPAIR TEAM WHICH VISITED
ROMANIA JUNE 23 - JULY 11 CONTAINS FOLLOWING ITEM:
BEGIN QUOTE B. ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT CHOSEN
FOR IMMEDIATE PURCHASE: 1. SIX - 130 TON TRUCK CRANES
WITH TELESCOPING BOOMS. THESE CRANES HAVE A COST OF
ABOUT \$500,000 EACH OR ALMOST 43 OF THE TOTAL FUNDS
AVAILABLE. 2. FIVE - 75 TON TRUCK CRANES WITH
TELESCOPING BOOMS. THESE HAVE A COST OF ABOUT \$300,000
EACH OR ANOTHER 22 OF FUNDS. THUS, 65 OF FUNDS AVAILABLE
ARE SLATED TO BE SPENT ON 11 CRANES.

IN BUCHAREST, PLOIESTI, CIMPINA, IASI, PITESI, THOUSANDS
OF BUILDINGS ARE IN GREAT NEED OF MAJOR REPAIRS. NONE OF
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THE ABOVE EQUIPMENT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO SUCH REPAIRS AND
LITTLE DEMOLITION IS LEFT TO BE DONE. BECAUSE OF THE
DENSITY OF CONSTRUCTION, REMAINING DEMOLITION MUST BE A
BRICK BY BRICK, COLUMN BY COLUMN AND BEAM BY BEAM,
DISASSEMBLY PROCESS IN WHICH SMALL PIECES ARE TRANSMITTED
TO THE GROUND BY CHUTES. WHEN WE MENTIONED THIS
TO THE GOR PURCHASING TEAM THEIR ANSWER WAS "BUT YOU

HAVEN'T BEEN TO CRAIOVA". HOWEVER, IN THE "OBSERVATIONS OF

THE BEHAVIOR OF BUILDINGS IN THE ROMANIA EARTHQUAKE OF MARCH 4, 1977" BY GEORGE GATTAL AND CHARLES CULVER IN SECTION 3.4, A DISCUSSION OF BUILDING DAMAGE IN CRAIOVA, FAILS TO INDICATE CONDITIONS AT GREAT VARIANCE WITH THOSE THAT WE OBSERVED IN OTHER AREAS.

WE DID OBSERVE MANY, MANY CRANES, RAILROAD OR STATIONARY HAMMERHEADS, IN USE ON NEW CONSTRUCTION. THE BUCHAREST SKYLINE SEEMS RINGED WITH THEM. THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF CRANES. HOWEVER, WE DID NOT SEE MANY TRUCK CRANES. THE ONLY USE WE CAN CONCEIVE OF FOR THESE HEAVY CRANES IS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FACTORY BUILDINGS USING LARGE LONG SPAN PRECAST CONCRETE ROOF GIRDERS. SINCE THE DECLARED PURPOSE OF THE U.S. ASSISTANCE WAS TO BE HUMANITARIAN IN CHARACTER, WE RECOMMEND THAT THIS EQUIPMENT BE EITHER SCRATCHED COMPLETELY OR GREATLY REDUCED IN QUANTITY.

WE MADE A STRONG APPEAL TO THE GOR TO RECONSIDER THEIR REQUEST FOR 11 LARGE MOBILE TRUCK CRANES AND TO ORDER MORE OF THE MUCH NEEDED SMALL POWER OPERATED HAND TOOLS. HOWEVER, WE WERE RUNNING COUNTER TO DECISIONS MADE EARLIER BY POLITICAL LEADERS FOR REASONS WHICH WERE NOT OBVIOUS TO US. WE MAY HAVE BEEN MORE EFFECTIVE IN HELPING

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SELECT EQUIPMENT HAD THE TRIP BEEN A MONTH OR SO EARLIER.
END QUOTE

2. THE REPORT (COPY POUCHED TO EMBASSY AUGUST 20) ALSO COMMENTS, IN SOME CASES CRITICALLY, ON OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE CURRENT \$7 MILLION ASSISTANCE PACKAGE AND RECOMMENDS SOME ADDITIONAL ITEMS.

3. CATEGORIC REJECTION OF CRANES AS INAPPROPRIATE BY U.S. CONSTRUCTION EXPERTS RAISES A QUESTION WE MUST RESOLVE, PERHAPS BEFORE FIRST BATCH, FOR WHICH WE UNDERSTAND CONTRACTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN LET, ARE DELIVERED. IF WE ARE TO PROCEED, WE WILL NEED STRONG AND SPECIFIC JUSTIFICATION THAT CRANES CAN AND WILL BE USED IN MANNER CONSISTENT WITH PURPOSES OF U.S. ASSISTANCE.

4. THIS CABLE IS FOR YOUR INFORMATION ONLY. WE WILL BE MEETING SHORTLY WITH AID TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. CHRISTOPHER

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